

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method comprising:
 - 2 receiving a first merge document that is in a merge format;
 - 3 converting a second document from an original format to the merge format to create a second
 - 4 merge document;
 - 5 merging the first merge document and the second merge document to generate a composite
 - 6 merge document; and
 - 7 delivering said composite merge document to an output device;
 - 8 wherein the original format is a format that is not supported by the output device; and
 - 9 wherein the merge format is a format that is supported by the output device.
- 1 2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
 - 2 generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original
 - 3 document from an original format to the merge format.
- 1 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging
- 2 Format (SPIF).
- 1 4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the merge format is PDL Postscript.
- 1 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first document is a background template document
- 2 and the second document is an overlay document.

1 6. The method of Claim 5,
2 wherein the background template document is originally created by a first document
3 authoring application; and
4 wherein the overlay document is originally created by a second document authoring
5 application that is different from said first document authoring application.

1 7. The method of Claim 5, wherein the background template document is created in a second
2 original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.

3 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the conversion of the second original document to the
4 merge format occurs at a merge utility that performs the merging of the first document and
5 the second document.

1 9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the converting of the second document from the original
2 format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:
3 generating, based on the original format, a set of conversion instructions to convert the
4 second document into said second merge document;
5 passing the set of conversion instructions to a document authoring application that created
6 the second document; and
7 the document authoring application generating the second merge document based on said set
8 of conversion instructions.

1 10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method further comprises receiving a request to
2 merge documents containing information about a document authoring application that
3 created the second document; and
4 wherein the converting of the second document from the original format to the merge format
5 to create the second merge document includes:
6 generating, based on the information about the document authoring application, a set of
7 conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge
8 document;
9 passing the set of conversion instructions to the document authoring application; and
10 the document authoring application generating the second merge document based on said set
11 of conversion instructions.

1 11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is in the merge format.

1 12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is a template for
2 creating other documents.

1 13. The method of Claim 1, further comprising performing the step of merging the first
2 document and the second document in response to receiving a request to merge
3 documents.

1 14. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 receiving a request to merge documents;

3 generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original
4 document from an original format to the merge format;
5 wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF);
6 wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is
7 an overlay document;
8 wherein the background template document is originally created by a first document
9 authoring application; and
10 wherein the overlay document is originally created by a second document authoring
11 application that is different from said first document authoring application;
12 wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and
13 converted from the second original format to the merge format.

1 15. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 1.

1 16. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 2.

1 17. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 3.

1 18. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 4.

1 19. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 5.

1 20. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 6.

1 21. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 7.

1 22. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 8.

1 23. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 9.

1 24. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 10.

1 25. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 11.

1 26. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 12.

1 27. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 13.

1 28. A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which
2 when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to
3 perform the method recited in Claim 14.